

**Submission
No 24**

**INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC FUNDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

Organisation: Forbes Shire Council

Name: Ms Carissa Bywater

Position: General Manager

Date Received: 23/09/2010



Forbes Shire Council

Administration Centre: 2 Court Street, Forbes NSW 2871

ABN 86 023 614 567

Please Quote Ref: CB.JCC E10/030

20 September 2010

Mr Furolo MP
The Chair
Joint Standing Committee of Electoral Matters
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**Subject: Submission into public funding of Local Government
Election Campaigns**

Dear Mr Furolo

Council would be pleased to make a submission to the inquiry into public funding of Local Government elections.

By way of background information, Forbes is situated in the heart of the Lachlan Valley, approximately 390km west of Sydney. Our LGA covers 4717 sq/km and has a population of approximately 9360 people. Forbes LGA is predominately a primary producing area with strong small business and light industrial sectors.

Concerning Question 1 from your issues paper, Council is in favour of public funding for local government elections; many regional and rural based councils are not aligned to the traditional state or federal political parties, but are in fact a group of independent candidates that must personally finance the cost of campaigning. Public funding of elections opens up participation by candidates from varied walks of life, allowing a diversity of representation in local government.

Concerning Question 4 from your issues paper, Council believes the State Government should be responsible for financing local government elections. Many regional and rural based councils have an insufficient tax base to raise additional funds to finance local government elections. In contrast to State Government revenue opportunities, councils primary source of income is through rates levy, which is subject to regulatory rate-pegging caps. Grassroot governments should spend their limited resources on providing core services to their local communities and not on the funding of electoral spending imposed by State Government legislation.

Concerning Question 7 from your issues paper, factors which impact on the costs of campaigning for local government include:

- i. The demographics of the LGA - the Forbes LGA Council has a predominately ageing population that is most effectively reached by the paying for traditional print and radio media; free social-networking opportunities only reach a small part of local population able to vote.

/2...

All mail to:
General Manager
PO Box 333
Forbes NSW 2871

General Enquiries:
Ph: (02) 6850 2300
Fx: (02) 6850 2399

Mayor &
General Manager:
Ph: (02) 6850 2304

Engineering Services:
Ph: (02) 6850 2333
Fx: (02) 6850 2398

Environmental Services:
Ph: (02) 6850 2344

forbes@forbes.nsw.gov.au

- ii. The area of the LGA - the Forbes LGA covers 4717 sq/km and comprises one major town, located in the middle of the LGA, four villages and many localities spread throughout the LGA. A significant number of eligible voters reside outside the town area, making the cost of travel into the regions a factor for many candidates.

Concerning Question 9 from your issues paper, Council is not aware of any sources of funding for local government elections other than by the personal contribution made by the candidates and in turn potentially discourage broader representation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to your inquiry and I would be pleased to expand on any aspect of the letter.

Yours faithfully



Carissa Bywater
GENERAL MANAGER